



ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

ARLINGTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

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December 2, 2011

Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Boulevard
Suite 300
Arlington, Virginia 22201

- SUBJECT:**
- 1. A. Five-Year Review of Arlington County's Comprehensive Plan,** including the General Land Use Plan, the Master Transportation Plan, the Storm Water Master Plan, the Water Distribution System Master Plan, the Sanitary Sewer Collection System Master Plan, the Recycling Program Implementation Plan and Map, the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Ordinance and Plan, the Public Spaces Master Plan and the Historic Preservation Master Plan.
 - B. Reprinting of the General Land Use Plan (GLUP)** and addition of language throughout the booklet to describe and reference changes that have previously been made to the GLUP map, plans and policies.

- RECOMMENDATION:**
- 1. A. Approve the Five-Year Review of Arlington County's Comprehensive Plan set forth in the attached document, endorse the proposed planning initiatives for the next five (5) years outlined in said document, and direct the Planning Commission to continue to review the Comprehensive Plan on an ongoing basis during the five (5)-year cycle, with recommendations:**
 - 1) Add to the list of *other requested studies that may be undertaken during the next four years (July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2015)* (page 59 of the document) a Lee Highway Corridor Study.**
 - 2) The County Board direct the County Manager to provide staff support to the Planning Commission to undertake a review of the Comprehensive Plan towards the goal of reorganizing its structure and allowing additional components.**
 - B. Approve the Reprinting of the General Land Use Plan (GLUP) and addition of language throughout the booklet to describe and reference changes that have previously been made to the GLUP map, plans and policies.**

PC #32.A.B.

Dear County Board Members:

The Planning Commission heard these items at its November 28, 2011 meeting. Matt Mattauszek, Planning staff, described the review of the County's Comprehensive Plan, the reprinting of the GLUP and changes to the GLUP booklet. Claude Williamson, Planning staff, was also present.

Public Speakers

Bernie Berne, representing the Buckingham Community Civic Association, commented that the Association's 2006 Neighborhood Conservation Plan states that the neighborhood wants no changes to the 1980 Ballston Sector Plan. The Sector Plan shows a commercial strip in this location with an area of trees behind it. The GLUP designation for the American Service Center site is inappropriate relative to the Sector Plan and needs to be revisited. Its "High-Medium Residential Mixed-Use GLUP designation and "R-C" zoning are inconsistent with the sector plan and inappropriate for the site. R-C zoning is illegal for this site as the Zoning Ordinance requires R-C to be within one-quarter mile of the Metro station. Residential does not fit on Glebe Road. He does not know why this parcel was rezoned, but this should be revised.

A. Five-Year Review of Arlington County's Comprehensive Plan

Planning Commission Report

Commissioner Savela reported that the LRPC reviewed the Comprehensive Plan, in which most of the focus was on editorial and organizational issues, and on the work plan for the next several years. She clarified that the purpose of the five-year review is to provide a historical record of what changes to the Comprehensive Plan have occurred in the last five years and is not intended to change any policies that the County Board has adopted.

Planning Commission Discussion

Commissioner Cole suggested that a footnote be provided to address the timing for inclusion in the Comprehensive Plan those adopted land use goals and objectives outlined on page 6 of the document. Mr. Mattauszek agreed to include this information.

Commissioner Cole noted that when the Planning Commission met with the County Board in 2010 about planning priorities, planning for Lee Highway was identified; however, it is not included in the list of requested studies for 2011 through 2015 (page 59 of document). Commissioner Savela responded that she did not think it was discussed at the October LRPC meeting but it was discussed at earlier LRPC meetings, as well as a Planning Commission hearing. Much of the discussion focused on the availability of staff resources. While there was great interest among Commissioners for initiating a study, the discussion highlighted the lack of push from the community to take this on. Also, the extent of the study needed to be determined; Lee Highway is a long corridor with very disparate segments, and there were different thoughts on whether a study should focus on the entire corridor or on the commercial sections. If a study were undertaken for the entire length of the corridor, that would be a huge drain on resources without any expected supplemental funding.

Commissioner Cole asked for clarification of the Commercial Area Study (page 59 of document), and whether it would be the edge study or a study of small commercial areas located outside major corridors. Mr. Williamson responded that smaller neighborhood commercial areas that have not been planned would be studied, with the goal of developing guiding principles. A pilot project would be initiated and could include segments of Lee Highway or another commercial area in the County.

Commissioner Monfort noted that he was interested in a study of Lee Highway. When he first joined the Planning Commission there was a project on Lee Highway in Cherrydale that was brought forward. It did not comply very well with the Lee Highway Cherrydale Revitalization Plan, yet the Planning Commission recommended approval anyway with some Commissioners suggesting that the age of the 1995 Revitalization Plan made it less influential. Since there is no desire to update the Lee Highway Cherrydale Revitalization Plan, he believes the plan is still current and in effect, and any projects that come in should be consistent with that plan.

Commissioner Forinash commented that he was dismayed to see that a Lee Highway study had been included in the last Five-Year Review as a potential initiative, but that it had not been undertaken and was no longer on the list of potential initiatives for the next five-year period. He believes the possible inclusion of a section of Lee Highway in a potential commercial area pilot study is inadequate. All long range planning exercises are drains on County resources, and this is not a reason to forego this study. While Lee Highway neighborhoods have not coalesced behind the need for a planning exercise as the Columbia Pike neighborhoods did, some planning resources devoted to this effort could help to coalesce these neighborhoods.

Commissioner Harner expressed that resources should be provided to facilitate a study of Lee Highway. It is an area that is in sore need of attention. He commented that Lee Highway is a parallel corridor to Columbia Pike, and they both contain a series of commercial areas separated by infill residential development that do not lend themselves very well to traditional development models. He sees no reason why Lee Highway would be more difficult to plan than Columbia Pike, and cited similar land use and parcel size characteristics along the two corridors. He noted that there should be some ability to put resources into scoping and planning for a Lee Highway area study.

Commissioner Fallon echoed the sentiments of the other Commissioners regarding the need to look more closely at Lee Highway. He noted that one difference between Columbia Pike and Lee Highway is that there was a perception among Columbia Pike residents that they were being neglected and there was a sense of decline, and he does not feel that there is the same feeling among Lee Highway residents. He believes there is an opportunity to do something with Lee Highway, but not necessarily at the same magnitude or level of impact. There should be flexibility in the Comprehensive Plan's work plan to add new studies as opportunities arise. Additional special planning and land use studies, such as the Shirlington Crescent study, require significant staff resources not reflected in the document. We often spend much time on replanning in Arlington County. For example, we are going to spend more time on the Historic Preservation Plan. However, we overlook places like Lee Highway.

Commissioner Cole noted that two recent special GLUP studies were for areas on Lee Highway: Bergman's and Colony House. These special studies may have been unnecessary if we had had a

plan in place for Lee Highway. There are many areas along Lee Highway that are ripe for redevelopment, and we may have special GLUP studies going on all along Lee Highway. Having a more systematic plan in place would make more sense.

Commissioner Malis noted that the areas on Lee Highway that were subject to recent special GLUP studies called for significantly more density. She noted that Commissioner Fallon suggested that Lee Highway not be subject to the level of density created in the Columbia Pike or East Fall Church plans. She noted that Columbia Pike's plan calls for development in the three to six story range and suggested it will be very difficult to create a redevelopment plan that captures developers' interest without offering some sort of density increase, given underlying by-right property rights. Commissioner Malis wondered whether there is sufficient community interest in redevelopment with significant changes in form and density and offered that undertaking such a study is premature until there have been discussions with the community to gauge their interest. The special GLUP studies done for the Lee Highway sites have suggested much higher density levels and may portend the levels of density needed in a redevelopment plan. If the community is really interested in better sidewalks and general streetscape improvements, then that is a different undertaking than a redevelopment plan.

Commissioner Kumm stated that she understood staff's justification for the Commercial Area Study since it is necessary to have some guiding principles when reviewing site plans. However, Lee Highway is a series of discrete neighborhood commercial places, and a generic study does not accomplish the goal of creating places. A study of Lee Highway may be able to achieve the place-making needed. A study should not look to create an expanded commercial area along Lee Highway, but rather compact place-making commercial centers. She believes that the residents are interested in planning for something beyond what is there today, and this should be explored further. She agreed with Commissioner Malis that there may be some push back from the communities regarding density, as Lee Highway is not next to transit or light rail as Ballston or Columbia Pike.

Commissioner Harner noted that a study could find that redevelopment with additional density, public facilities, open space, or other elements are important and appropriate for Lee Highway, and therefore would not want to rule out the opportunity for improvement. Part of the role of Planning Commissioners is to identify opportunities for improvements for the county and to seize these opportunities. Among the major commercial areas and corridors in the County, Lee Highway is an area that has not received the same level of attention and should be high on the priority list.

Commissioner Savela suggested that Lee Highway would be a good area for discussion next year at LRPC. She expressed concern that Lee Highway may get replanned through the piecemeal approach of special GLUP studies for unplanned areas, and the results may not conform to what might be envisioned for the whole of Lee Highway. The first step would be to develop a coordinated approach to reach out to the various communities on Lee Highway and begin a dialogue with them to identify their interests. She believes there are various nodes on Lee Highway that have been put forward as areas of concern. This is part of the justification for staff's proposed Commercial Areas Study, but a more coordinated approach to Lee Highway may be appropriate. The study would require significant staff time and resources, so there would have to be discussions with the Planning Director and the County Manager's Office on how to plan and staff it. Given the length of time that these processes are taking, there must be sufficient planning for staffing the process upfront. While the

Commission's mission is not to undertake planning based upon the workload of staff, the constraints of resources and time must be acknowledged and the Commission must work with the County Board and the County Manager's Office to identify priorities. The Commission must also acknowledge its own time constraints because these processes involve a lot of time and some perceive these processes are taking too long.

Commissioner Savela noted concerns expressed by Commissioner Harner about the structure and elements of the Comprehensive Plan, and referred to Section VIII. Appendix, Excerpts from the Code of Virginia, and the list of potential elements identified in recommendation #2 (page 68) that are suggested for inclusion in a comprehensive plan. She drew Commissioners' attention to the item referencing public facilities, and suggested a master plan covering the topics listed under this item would receive a lot of public support. Community members typically raise concerns regarding the school capacity, the adequacy of fire and police services, and the availability of other public facilities throughout any long range planning exercise. Her personal concern is how to plan for and build to accommodate a sense of community, as her Crystal City experience has shown that it is very difficult in the high-density urban cores to get civic associations started. While the population residing along metro corridors is growing, the needs and concerns of the multi-family housing residents are not coming to the forefront and the single family detached communities are the ones more prominently represented in planning discussions. She believes the county would be much stronger if it figures out to develop a sense of public involvement from this group.

Commissioner Savela also referred to the paragraph below #8 (page 68) in the Code of Virginia excerpt that speaks to the construction, rehabilitation and maintenance of affordable housing that meets the current and future needs of residents of all levels of income. This is a requirement of all localities in the Commonwealth of Virginia, and while Arlington County has affordable housing plans, goals and tools, a review of that paragraph highlights how far behind we are in accommodating the future housing needs of residents at all income levels, given projected population growth. At this point, Arlington is trying to minimize the loss of existing market-rate affordable and committed affordable units while the population is growing significantly, but the percentage of residents who are lower income will continue to decline as residents are forced out of the county. This may be another reason to consider new corridor plans, such as Lee Highway or Arlington Boulevard, for potential new density to meet the need for market-rate and committed affordable units.

Commissioner Harner inquired as to why affordable housing and sustainability are not included as distinct components of the Comprehensive Plan. He suggested a possible reorganization of existing elements and additional elements into a more cohesive structure. The hiring of a new Planning Director provides a good opportunity for the Planning Commission to initiate such a review.

Commissioner Savela noted that the Community Energy Plan will become a part of the Comprehensive Plan when that process is complete, and that this process and those associated with other adopted elements should serve to remind the Commission how long it takes to develop a new Comprehensive Plan element. In terms of reorganizing the Comprehensive Plan, she reminded the Commission that CPHD is not the department in charge of the elements of the Comprehensive Plan, but rather the elements come from different County departments and are supported by different commissions. Consequently, the distinct elements are driven in part by the distinct Departments and

Commissions with primary responsibility for them. In order to reorganize the Plan, it would require coordination among multiple departments and commissions. Consequently, blending different elements could greatly complicate and delay future revision.

Commissioner Malis referred to the paragraph on Arlington County's Affordable Housing Goals and Targets (page 57), where it states that revisions to the Goals and Targets will be reviewed by the County Board in the spring of 2015. She thought that the Housing Commission was already reviewing this to bring forward to the County Board sooner than 2015. Mr. Mattauszek agreed to confirm this.

Commissioner Malis confirmed the timing for completion of the Columbia Pike Neighborhoods Plan (page 62) for the 2nd Quarter 2012, and questioned the timing for starting the implementation arm of the plan, the Form-Based Code Expansion, in the 4th Quarter 2012 as shown in the document. Mr. Williamson responded that the timing may need to be moved up and staff will review the schedule to reflect the correct timing.

Planning Commission Motion

Commissioner Savela moved that the Planning Commission recommend that the County Board approve the Five-Year Review of the Comprehensive Plan, endorse the planning initiatives for the next five years as outlined in the staff report, and direct the Planning Commission to continue to review the Comprehensive Plan on an ongoing basis during the five year cycle. Commissioner Fallon seconded the motion.

Commissioner Cole requested unanimous consent to amend the motion to recommend that the County Board add to the list of *Other requested studies that may be undertaken during the next four years (July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2015)* (page 59) a study of Lee Highway. There was no objection, so the amendment was incorporated into the main motion.

Commissioner Kumm requested unanimous consent to amend the motion to recommend additional time for review of the Rosslyn Sector Plan Addendum, identified in the table of Scheduled Priorities (page 62). There was an objection. Commissioner Kumm moved to amend the motion to recommend additional time for review of the Rosslyn Sector Plan Addendum through the 2nd Quarter 2013. Commissioner Fallon seconded the motion.

Commissioner Malis inquired about the timing for the start of the Rosslyn Sector Plan Addendum review process and whether staff was on schedule. Mr. Williamson responded that the process started the 3rd Quarter 2011, and may be slightly behind schedule for the first community kick-off meeting. Commissioner Malis indicated that while she is sympathetic that the study may have an unrealistic end-date, she is uncomfortable expanding the timing of it because of the other people involved in putting the workplan together. Commissioner Kumm responded that there are several high profile projects proposed in Rosslyn, and given the time it took for the Crystal City study, she is concerned that the timeframe is not realistic.

Commissioner Savela commented that the timeframe for the Rosslyn Sector Plan Addendum review process received a lot of discussion at the LRPC, with staff and with the County Board. The LRPC

had recommended more time, but the County Board acted on the proposed County Manager's scope and process, and adopted the timeframe. Therefore, she does not support a motion to change the timing. However, she questions how realistic this timeframe is, given the process did not start on schedule, along with the timeframes of other initiatives. The full sign ordinance update is still shown as being completed this quarter, even though we are only dealing with a small portion of it this month and the County Board has agreed to an extension. In addition, the American Service Center and PenPlace processes are presented in the document as scheduled for completion by the end of the 3rd Quarter 2011, and those processes are not yet complete. The Commission needs to press the County Manager's Office to be more realistic about the timing of these planning exercises and devoting the resources needed to accomplish these tasks in a timely manner.

Commissioner Cole commented that he does not support the extension of the deadline to complete the Rosslyn Sector Plan Addendum review, given that the scope of the Rosslyn study has been reduced very significantly. Crystal City had a very different scope, whereas this is not a comprehensive study of Rosslyn. Therefore a shorter timeframe can be accomplished with the right contributions of all parties involved.

The amended motion failed by a vote of 1-9. Commissioner Kumm supported the amended motion. Commissioners Cole, Fallon, Forinash, Harner, Malis, Monfort, Savela, and Sockwell opposed the amended motion.

Commissioner Harner requested unanimous consent to amend the motion to recommend that the County Board charge the Planning Commission to undertake a review of the Comprehensive Plan towards the goal of reorganizing its structure and allowing additional components. There was an objection. Commissioner Harner moved to amend the motion to recommend that the County Board charge the Planning Commission to undertake a review of the Comprehensive Plan towards the goal of reorganizing its structure and allowing additional components. Commissioner Monfort seconded the motion. Commissioner Savela noted that the Planning Commission does not need the County Board to direct the Planning Commission to review the Comprehensive Plan, as the Code of Virginia actually requires that local planning commissions prepare and recommend a comprehensive plan. She suggested that Commissioner Harner rephrase his request for unanimous consent to recommend that the County Board direct the County Manager to make staff available to support the Planning Commission's efforts in reviewing the structure and components of the Comprehensive Plan.

Commissioner Harner concurred with Commissioner Savela. Commissioner Harner requested unanimous consent to recommend that the County Board direct the County Manager to provide staff support to the Planning Commission to undertake a review of the Comprehensive Plan towards the goal of reorganizing its structure and allowing additional components. There was an objection. Commissioner Harner moved to amend his previous motion to recommend that the County Board direct the County Manager to provide staff support to the Planning Commission to undertake a review of the Comprehensive Plan towards the goal of reorganizing its structure and allowing additional components. The Commission voted 9-0 in favor of the amended motion. The Commission voted 9-0 in favor of the amended motion becoming a part of the main motion. Commissioners Cole, Fallon, Forinash, Harner, Kumm, Malis, Monfort, Savela, and Sockwell supported the amended motion.

The Planning Commission voted 9-0 to support the main motion, as amended. Commissioners Cole, Fallon, Forinash, Harner, Kumm, Malis, Monfort, Savela, and Sockwell supported the motion.

B. Reprinting of the GLUP and addition of language throughout the booklet.

Planning Commission Report

Commissioner Savela reported that the LRPC reviewed the reprinting of the GLUP and language added to the booklet. Staff has responded to extensive comments on the GLUP map and booklet, and she commended staff on the good work that was done to incorporate the changes. She particularly thanked staff for adding the Appendix, and will provide staff with some recommended edits to clarify the chart.

Planning Commission Discussion

Commissioner Cole asked for clarification about the GLUP and zoning designations for the area on the map bounded by North Quincy Street, I-66 and 14th Street North. Mr. Williamson responded that it is zoned for industrial but planned for low residential.

Commissioner Malis noted that the previous GLUP map showed the footprint of certain public facilities, such as schools and inquired as to why they are no longer shown on the reprinted GLUP map. Mr. Mattauszek responded that the intent is to show the land use, not development, and to be consistent throughout the map. Commissioner Malis responded that reprint did not label the schools, but labeled parks, so it can be misleading. Mr. Mattauszek agreed to consider labeling the schools.

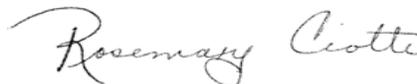
Commissioner Kumm commended staff on the map and booklet. She suggested that a different color be used to depict major highways in the County to help orient users of the map. She also suggested that the cover's images were generic in nature, reflecting scenes that could be taken from any urban area in the country, and suggested they be replaced with more distinctive images that reflect Arlington's unique pattern of development, such as aerial views of compact neighborhoods.

Planning Commission Motion

Commissioner Savela moved that the Planning Commission recommend that the County Board approve the reprinting of the General Land Use Plan (GLUP), including booklet and map, to incorporate revisions that have occurred since the last printing in 2004 as well as organizational and editorial changes. Commissioner Fallon seconded the motion.

The Planning Commission voted 9-0 to support the motion. Commissioners Cole, Fallon, Forinash, Harner, Kumm, Malis, Monfort, Savela, and Sockwell supported the motion.

Respectfully Submitted,
Arlington County Planning Commission



Rosemary Ciotti, Planning Commission Chair